

[Mr. K. Madhava Kurup.]

have to register a document. But the staff will have to go up the hill every day and the complaint should have come from them, if at all.

The question that Government be granted a sum of Rs. 3,18,514 under demand V - Registration was put to vote and carried.

The motion was carried and the grant was made.

DEMAND VI—RAILWAYS.

Mr. R. Rama Varrier: Sir, I move for a grant of Rs. 21,500 under Demand VI—Railways.

The Demand was put to vote and carried, and the grant was made.

DEMAND VII—PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT including WATER WORKS AND DRAINAGE.

Mr. I. C. Chacko (*Executive Engineer in charge of the duties of the Chief Engineer*): Sir, I rise to move for a grant of Rs. 52,52,419 under Demand VII—Public Works Department including Water works and Drainage.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvila: I submit that there are too many Executive Engineers in the State.

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai: Sir, I rise to a point of order. I wish to know whether the House will not rise at 4-30 P. M.

President: During Budget session we sit till 5 o' clock.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvila: About 30 years ago when their work was very different and when there was no Motor cars in this country and when there was no convenience for journey I understand that there were stations at an interval of 12 miles. Now this arrangement is not at all necessary. I am also told that there is a rule that an Executive Engineer should not remain in his Head Quarters for more than 10 days in the months. I do not think there is hardly any Executive Engineer who does not return to his House each day. They can return to their Head quarters within a short space of time. Therefore I feel that there are too many Executive Engineers and that their number should be reduced. For example, there is now an Executive Engineer with his Head Quarters at Alwaye. I am told that it was for the convenience of Mr. Everard that Alwaye was made the Head Quarters. I am told that he was not very healthy and in order to suit his convenience of going to Bangalore Alwaye was made his Head Quarters. So instead of Muvattupuzha being made the Head Quarters, Alwaye was made the Head Quarters.

President: When was this?

Mr. K. K. Kuruvila: About thirty years ago.

My contention is that between Alwaye and Kottayam and Quilon we need only two Executive Engineers instead of three. If the Head Quarters is moved from Alwaye to Muvattupuzha and from Quilon to Thiruvella or Chengannur two executive Engineers will be able to cover the whole of Central and Northern Travancore. It may be a matter of difficulty to combine the Trivandrum and Nagercoil Divisions. The Executive Engineer in Trivandrum may have to stay in the town, and probably his jurisdiction cannot be extended to Nagercoil.

I also feel that we do not really want two Chief Engineers. This, I believe is only a temporary arrangement and that in course of time Government will change it. In the budget there is provision only for one Chief Engineer.

Another point I wish to emphasise is about the long delay in the execution of work. I think during the general discussion of budget I said that in certain cases the amounts lapse even before the work is undertaken. If we look at the time when the real estimates are made, and when the work is finished it will take about 8, 10, or 12 years. That is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I am told that the first estimate is really prepared by Maistries who have not the training to do it. The Sub Engineer or the Overseer safely transfers the responsibility to the Maistries. Those estimates are sanctioned. Finally when the work begins we find that the estimates will have to be altered. Then the estimate is sent back to the Chief Engineer. The same process goes on and it has been repeated year after year in this way. Therefore I feel that the number of Maistries in the office should be reduced. What is usually done is that from the Work Establishment men are recruited to the Chief Engineer's office and it is those people who do such work. They have no permanent standing in the department, no pension, and they do only occasional work. I think there are 18 such places now. So if we reduce the number of Maistries and appoint efficient men to do the work, much time and money could be saved.

The third point I wish to speak about is with regard to corruption in the Department. I do not say that the Engineering Department is worse than other departments in this respect—As has been pointed out there may be black sheep in every department. But when such a fact is brought to the notice of the Government, immediate action should be taken. I myself personally brought to the notice of the Chief Secretary instance of one man in the Engineering

[Mr. K. K. Kuruvila.]

Department. I have received a letter today to say that though immediate action was taken in transferring the man investigation is going slow. There is always the tendency to shield the men under them. It is not only the common practice with Government but also in every organisation including the one in which I work. If instances are brought to the notice of Government and if Government would take immediate action, corruption will be immediately stopped.

Therefore my main suggestions are that, reduction should be made in the number of Executive Engineers and their staff and that immediate action should be taken and investigation conducted if a case of dishonesty is brought to the notice of Government.

Mr. James Fletcher : It is gratifying to refer to the new building that has been constructed without the usual delay of the P. W. D. The New Public Offices were begun and completed within a very reasonable time and it is a monument of their quick and good work.

The new Public Offices were begun and completed within a very short time. It stands as an example of the quick work that can be executed by the P. W. D. Sir, such buildings are necessary in Trivandrum. As far as possible, the same condition may be included in other contracts also. Many of our offices were housed in rented buildings and those buildings were not suitable for accommodating the offices. Yet office work had to be carried on. Then this idea of housing all these offices in a separate single building dawned upon the Government and a good site was chosen and a nice and good building was constructed on that site. I am happy to congratulate the Government on this.

Mr. V. Sankara Menon : Has the Honourable Member got any house sites near the new Public Offices?

President : Biographical details are not quite relevant to this discussion.

Mr. James Fletcher : Without any reference to house site and all that, I may say, Sir, that the new Public Offices are now housed in a most attractive building situated in a most suitable site. Sir, Public Offices have to be accommodated in good buildings. The advantage that Government derive in housing these offices in a building of their own is that they save about Rs. 10,000 which they used to incur by way of rent. There are other places where housing Government Offices are in urgent need if Government were to construct suitable buildings for the same. If they do this, they can save another item of expenditure.

Now, I come to the recently completed work of the P. W. D. viz., the dustless road from Cape to Trivandrum. It has become a great success and it really adds to the credit of Travancore to have such a road. Sir, it is my desire to see another road from Trivandrum to Parur made similarly dustless. But I am aware that it is unthinkable at the present time. However, if our cement factory becomes a success I am sure that Government would extend this amenity to all parts of Travancore as early as possible.

Next I come to a local need. Sir, the road which goes from the Statue to the General Hospital in Trivandrum is very narrow and during office days the traffic is very great and many in this House might have experienced the risk of walking along that road at 9 or 9-30 in the morning, dodging bicycles, cars, jufkas and the town bus which goes to the beach. At that particular time children will be going to the School and clerks and other officers will be going to their respective offices. It is high time that the Government take steps to widen that road without any delay.

Mr. K. M. Kesavan: Sir, as I do not own any house site near any public offices and as such I cannot pay as much encomium as my Honourable Friend Mr. Fletcher did. But I can say this much about the new Public Office building. It has added to the beauty of the City and has provided much convenience so far as official transactions are concerned.

My friend Mr. Kuruvilla was mentioning about the numerous staff of the P. W. D. But I have no complaint on that score, provided the Department engages itself in works like opening of new communications, putting up of new bridges and repairing old ones as much as they could. Sir, on the bus line from Quilon to Alleppey there are two important bridges which are not attended to by the P. W. D. The iron bridge at Quilon has been in a very bad condition for a long time. During last year in reply to an interpellation of mine it was stated that estimates were called for for the repair of that bridge. I hope that the work will be taken up in earnest and the bridge will be ready for heavy traffic. So also the bridge at Chavara is in a hopeless condition. It should be attended to by the P. W. D. immediately.

With regard to the needs of the rural parts, again in reply to an interpellation of mine a year ago as to the construction of a bridge at Pathiyoor on the Kayankulam-Muttam road, it was stated that an estimate for an ascu treated bridge or Kamesam Bridge as we now call such bridges was called for. But from the Budget I could not see any provision allotted for this work and I am at a loss to know what has become of the estimate which was called for.

Mr. I. C. Chacko : Is the Honourable Member aware that the Pathiyoor bridge is a first class reinforced concrete bridge ?

Mr. K. M. Kesavan : Sir, I am not referring to the Pathiyoor bridge on the eastern side of the Temple but I am referring to the bridge on the western side of the Temple. And I had sent no interpellation with regard to the bridge on the eastern side. The road on the western side of the Temple is flooded with water in the rainy season and at times it will be under 5 ft. of water. People experience much difficulty in those times to use the road. They have to find a canoe for it. During the last year, the people of the Kartikapally taluk joined together and opened 3 ryots' roads which come to a length of about 11 miles. To the credit of the P. W. D., it is found that small sums though inadequate have been allotted for the maintenance of these roads. So far as it goes, such things are welcome and good in their own way. It was discussed in this House and the Government expressed their sympathy and kind feeling for putting up a bridge at Aroor, connecting Travancore and Cochin. Before entertaining such costly schemes I would suggest that there is another road on the route which goes from Thuravoor to Pallithode an entirely land route may be constructed. This is it. From Thuravoor on the Alleppey-Aroor road there is a village road going westward to Pallithodu. This may be widened and extended to Chittanam the southern most frontier of the Cochin State. I would request Government to take up this improvement of the road and open an entirely land route to Cochin without bridging Aroor ferry. With these words I support the demand.

Mr Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai : Sir, I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of Government the necessity for appointing an independent officer for co-ordinating the works regarding the minor irrigation projects in the State. Sir, more than any lift irrigation or other methods, I believe that it will be possible, if there is one man, and if he gets sufficient help by suitable amendments in the Irrigation Regulation for the acquisition of lands, to improve irrigational facilities in various parts of the country by completing proper irrigational works. If that were done, I feel sure that the yield of paddy can be considerably increased. Sir, it may be said that the executive engineers of the respective divisions must look after this work. But I would very humbly submit that that would not do. There must be one who should give sufficient thought to the subject and view the problem comprehensively and attend to the estimates prepared in the order of their urgency and merit. Some real good work was being done when the present officer who represents the department in the House was in charge of irrigation. In this connection I may also

suggest that there should be an irrigation fund. It should not be allowed to lapse at the end of the year but that must be available...

Mr. I. C. Chacko : May I know whether the Honourable Member is aware that even now there is a separate irrigation officer and Rs. 6,30,000 is allotted for the purpose?

Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai : Sir, I wanted to suggest that additional amounts should be added to what is really allotted. The strongest argument in favour of my contention is that if there is an officer who studies the problem carefully and puts forward schemes and accomplishes things within a definite time it would be of great benefit to the agriculturists. Sir, this is an absolute necessity. We have got vast areas of arable lands enough to produce what we want. And this can be utilised only if some attention is paid in time to the irrigational needs of the State. I am strongly of the opinion that an independent officer to look after irrigation works is absolutely necessary.

Then I wish to echo the opinion that has been expressed by my Honourable friend Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla with regard to the corruption in the department. I do not say that in the very philosophic sense that there is corruption in the department as it is bound to exist in any other department. But I wish to point out and I mean no disparagement.....

The House adjourned at 5 p. m. to meet again at 11 o'clock the next day.

V. S. ARUMUKHAM PILLAI,
Secretary to Sri Chithra State Council.